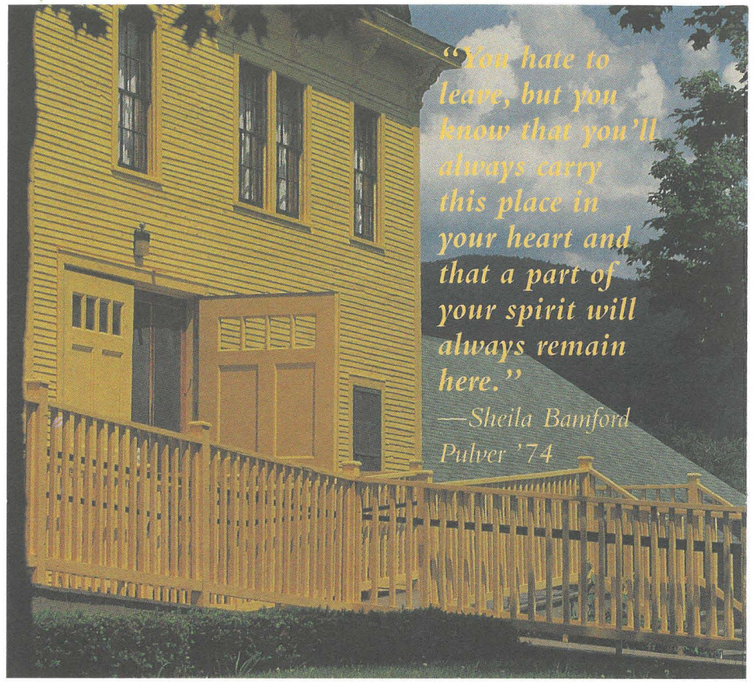

"You hate to leave, but you know that you'll always carry this place in your heart and that a part of your spirit will always remain here."
—Sheila Bamford Pulver '74

Visions and Choices

Where should we look to understand the world and the choices that confront us as we begin the 21st century? This year's Alumni College courses offer perspectives ranging from the ecology of a Green Mountain stream to the virtual reality of e-business, from the self-images of two Chinese cities, to America's image of itself in the myth of the Western hero. Two other Alumni College XXVI courses remind us that some things do not change. One examines how great writers have viewed the difficult moral choices that have always confronted individuals in trying circumstances. The other is an exploration of the eternal glory of Verdi's operas.

Faculty

Michael P. Claudon
Professor of Economics
Michael has been a member of the Middlebury faculty since 1970. After establishing himself as a successful scholar and teacher, he co-founded the Geonomics Institute in 1987, and served as its president through the fall of 1995. Geonomics performed a vital service in assisting the economic transition in the former Soviet Union, and Mike continues to travel to the Baltics to provide economic advice to their emerging free market economies. His Alumni College course grows out of a highly successful course taught during the past two January terms which has engaged students, along with alums from the business world, in considering issues surrounding the emerging digital age.

Nicholas Clifford,
College Professor Emeritus of History
Since his arrival at Middlebury in 1966, Nick has taught courses in East Asian history and, among other administrative duties, served as provost and, after retirement, as a College trustee. He has written on the history of Shanghai, and has led three Middlebury alumni trips to China, most recently in May of this year. His most recent book, *A Truthful Impression of the Country*, is a study of travel writing about China.

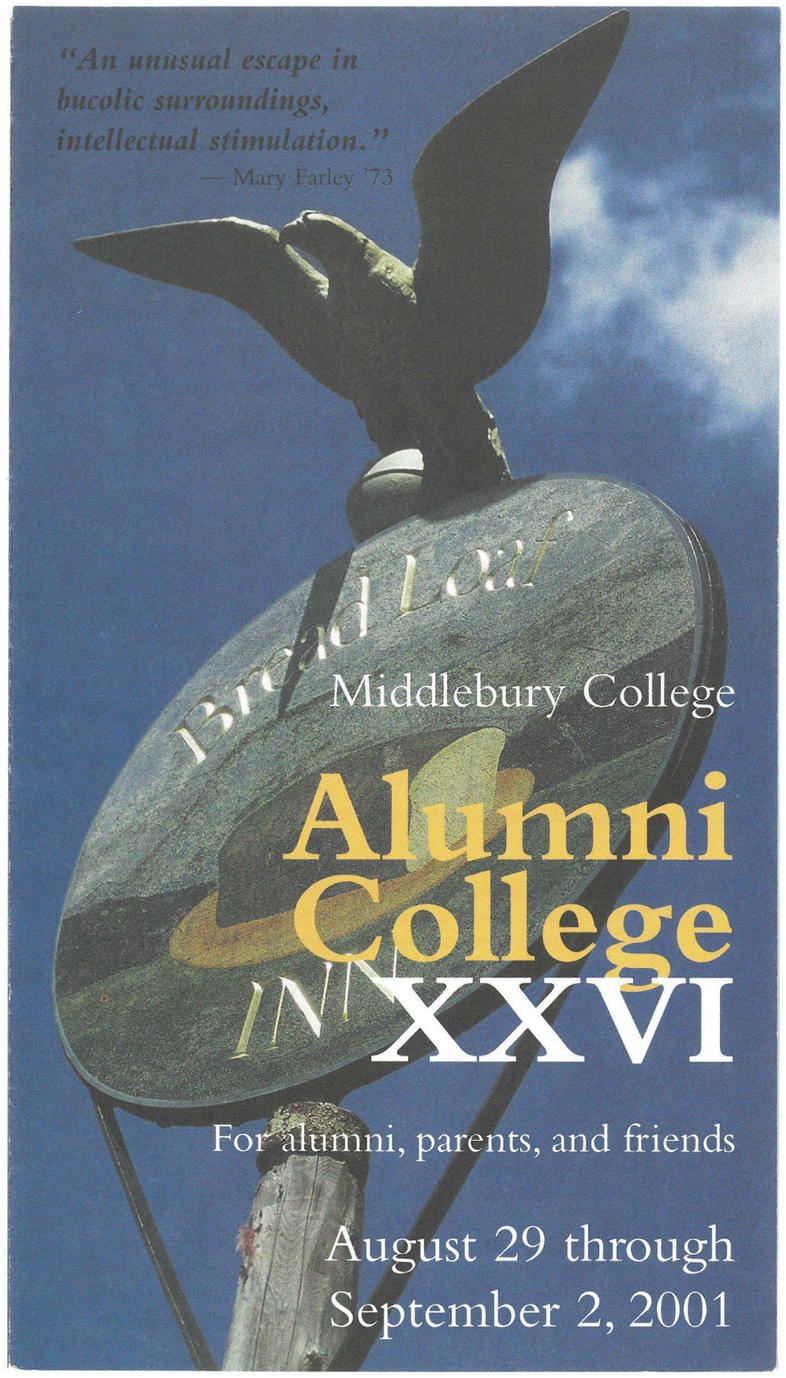
Deborah Evans, Visiting Instructor of American Literature and Civilization
Deb has been at Middlebury since 1996. A versatile teacher, her interests include film, writing, and literature. Her passion is 19th century American literature. Deb's Alumni College course, which has been taught as a highly popular first year seminar, evolved from her research on frontier women and interracial marriage. She currently is completing her Ph.D. at the University of North Carolina.

John M. Hunisak
Professor of History of Art and Architecture
John Hunisak has taught history of art and architecture at Middlebury since 1970. He is well-known to many alumni and parents as a leader of alumni trips abroad, a pre-performance lecturer at the Metropolitan Opera House for "Middlebury at the Met," and a frequent contributor to Alumni College. Professor Hunisak loves almost all things Italian—motor scooters, telefonini, and Neapolitan pickpockets excepted—but especially the art and architecture, the food and wine, and Verdi's operas. The history of art is his profession; opera is his avocation.

Brett Millier, Reginald L. Cook
Professor of American Literature
Brett, who joined the faculty in 1986, is currently chair of American Literature and Civilization. She is the author of several important works, including an acclaimed biography of Elizabeth Bishop and, most recently, a new book, *The Alchemists: American Women Poets and Alcohol*. All these things have been accomplished in addition to directing a student commons, serving on the Committee on Reappointment and Tenure, and raising two young children.

Thomas Moran
Assistant Professor of Chinese
Tom has taught Chinese language, literature and film at Middlebury since 1994. Tom first traveled to China in 1981. Since then he has lived in Beijing, Suzhou, and Taipei, although he now makes his home in Ripton, just a couple of miles from Bread Loaf. He has translated several Chinese stories into English. His most recent work, an article on the novel *Soul Mountain* by Nobel Prize winner Gao Xingjian, will be published this fall.

Sallie Sheldon
Professor of Biology
One of Middlebury's most dynamic science teachers, Sallie Sheldon studies anything that lives in any sort of water, including fish, aquatic insects, polar bears, and iron bacteria. Recently she has been investigating a biological control agent for an invasive foreign waterweed. Sallie has a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota with post-doctoral work at the University of Washington Friday Harbor Marine Labs. A confirmed northerner, she has been at Middlebury since 1985.



COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

1. **The Digital Economy: The End of the World as We Knew It?**
Michael Claudon, Professor of Economics

The explosion in E-Commerce has prompted speculation that the traditional "bricks and mortar" economy that we have known is being replaced by a new economic order. The meteoric rise of .coms during 1999, however, came crashing down to earth in 2000. But while many individual start-ups are failing, the "new economy" has continued its rapid growth. We will try to make sense of what is happening by exploring the profound effects that the growth of electronic commerce, changes in information, computing and communications are having on economies, economic competition, and society.

2. **Venerable Beijing, Great Shanghai: Viewing China, Past, Present, and Future Through Two Cities**
Nicholas Clifford, Professor Emeritus of History
Thomas Moran, Assistant Professor, Chinese

Beijing has been the capital of China for most of seven centuries. It also is the seat of high culture, a city that guards China's grand traditions. Shanghai, conversely, is modern, iconoclastic, and, some would say, more interested in quick profits than human values. Others, who view Beijing as constrained by over a half century of communism, look to Shanghai to lead the way to China's future. These two cities will be our vantage points as we consider China's past, present, and future.

3. **Experiencing Opera: Verdi**
John Hunisak, Professor, History of Art and Architecture

This year marks the centennial of the death of Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901), who dominated Italian opera during its golden age. We will focus on Verdi's works as we discuss opera as a composite art form that unifies vocal and orchestral sound, movement and scenery, lighting and dramatic action. It is arguably the most complete and satisfying of all aesthetic experiences. The course content will range from identification of operatic forms and conventions to the human and philosophical content of Verdi's creations. We also will compare Verdi to his Italian predecessors and his German contemporary, Richard Wagner (1813–83). Recordings and videos will be central to the classroom experience.

4. **The Western Hero: Visions and Revisions**
Deborah Evans, Visiting Instructor of American Literature and Civilization

From Daniel Boone and Calamity Jane to the Virginian and Will Kane, the rugged individual of the American west has figured prominently in our evolving national identity. This is still the case; indeed, one can find variations on the classic Western hero throughout the media today. By looking at depictions of this mythic figure in literature, film, and other visual arts, we will explore how changing social and cultural conditions, such as shifting awareness of race, gender, and class issues, have shaped this great American character from colonial times to the present.

5. **Literature and Moral Choice**
Brett Millier, Reginald L. Cook Professor of American Literature

Some of the most profound discussions of difficult moral and ethical decisions have been presented in the form of the choices confronting characters in great works of literature. After a little reading in theories of moral development and philosophy, we will read and discuss poems, short stories, and a novel or two that center on these choices. Our goal will be to learn something about how individuals, as portrayed by writers who are students of the human spirit, attempt to do the right thing in a complex world. Authors may include Dostoevsky, Bernard Malamud, Lawrence Kohlberg, Carol Gilligan, Flannery O'Connor, Jane Smiley, and Mark Twain.

6. **Seeing the World Through a Stream**
Sallie Sheldon, Professor of Biology

Look down at a stream, and you might notice some algae on rocks, perhaps some fish. But there are an incredible number of animals living amidst the rocks. In ten minutes of searching we could collect forty-five species. These animals can tell us what has happened throughout the drainage area. Finding a particular species of snail tells us that they heavily salted the roads last winter. If we spot an interesting mayfly, we know the water is pristine. How can they all coexist? We will study the life of streams and run an experiment to show what aspects of the habitat are important for the animals. And we'll have fun doing it!

After-dinner activities will include an evening with:

• **Meredith Parsons McComb '75** and **Emory Fanning,** Professor Emeritus of Music and College Organist. Meredith began her performing career as a singer while an undergraduate at Middlebury, under the guidance of Maestro Emory Fanning. She has returned to her alma mater as soloist with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Opera North, the Middlebury College Orchestra, and in recital. She has performed Richard Wagner's **Götterdämerung** with the Boston Symphony and staged performances of **Das Reingold** and **Götterdämerung** at the Metropolitan Opera. She recorded both of those operas under the direction of Maestro James Levine. Accompanied once again by Emory Fanning at the piano, she will perform Wagner's **Wesendonck Lieder** and several Italian arias.

• Middlebury's own fabulous **D8** a cappella group, who are eagerly anticipating their return to Alumni College, one of their favorite gigs.

REGISTRATION FORM

Alumni College XXVI / August 29 to September 2, 2001
Please reserve a place for me.

Name: _____

Class: _____

and a place for my spouse/guest: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

My first choice is #_____ My second choice is #_____

Spouse/guest first choice is #_____

Spouse/guest second choice is #_____

Special housing needs? _____

Fee
$450 all-inclusive cost per person (tuition, books, lodging, meals, and evening entertainment at Bread Loaf).

Method of payment
❒ Check payable to Middlebury College enclosed
❒ Visa ❒ MasterCard

Card number: _____

Expiration date: _____

Cardholder's name: _____

Cardholder's signature: _____

Please send form with payment to:
Alumni and Parent Programs Office
Meeker House, 46 Porter Field Road
Middlebury College
Middlebury, VT 05753

"An exhilarating time, a rejuvenating experience."
— Phyllis Cole Deming '51